NOVA SCOTIA

Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources

Statement of Mandate 2012-2013

Report DNR 2012-001
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1 Message from the Minister

I am pleased to present the 2012-13 Statement of Mandate for the Department of Natural Resources. The Statement of Mandate describes the department's overall mandate for natural resources management and how some significant upcoming departmental initiatives support government's core priorities.

The release of the natural resources strategy (The Path We Share, A Natural Resources Strategy for Nova Scotia 2011-2020) and the associated action plan (From Strategy to Action, An Action Plan for the Path We Share, A Natural Resources Strategy for Nova Scotia) in August 2011 was a major accomplishment of the department last year. This strategy will guide the management of natural resources in our province for the next decade or longer.

This strategy lays out a new approach to natural resources management in the province, with a vision for a sustainable and prosperous future. The strategy is based on building a culture of collaboration, achieving a sustainable balance of economic, environmental, and social benefits, research and knowledge sharing, and good governance.

Implementation of the new strategy will be a challenge. Achieving long-term economic gains while ensuring a healthy natural environment for current Nova Scotians and future generations will not be easy. But by working collaboratively with our partners, we can find innovative solutions that will balance the economic, environmental, and social impacts of resource development, conservation, and use.

I look forward to leading the department as we work together with our partners to put in place a new approach for managing our natural resources; one that will lead to a more sustainable and prosperous future for Nova Scotians.

Charlie Parker

Honourable Charlie Parker
Minister, Natural Resources

2 Message From The Deputy Minister

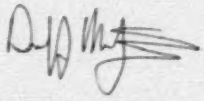
It is my pleasure, as Deputy Minister of the Department of Natural Resources, to share the department's Statement of Mandate for 2012-13 with you.

The last 12 months have been a period of accomplishment and challenges. Nova Scotia's strategy for managing natural resources was released last August. This was the culmination of several years of hard work by many members of the public, stakeholders, and department staff. Later in the year, Nova Scotians received the news of major changes at two of the province's large pulp and paper mills. Sawmills and hardwood manufacturers are also facing economic challenges as the demand for conventional lumber products remains soft.

Government responded with policies and programs to support the mills, their workers, and the province's woodlot owners. Government will continue to work to establish a sustainable balance in the forests sector; balance between the sector's economic and environmental health, as well as a social balance which considers the interests of the workers and families who rely on this renewable traditional industry.

The other areas covered by the natural resources strategy - biodiversity, geological resources, and provincial parks - are also significant contributors to the province. A number of initiatives are already underway, or are planned, in each of these areas. As with the forests sector, the department is striving toward ensuring that the right balance is struck between the province's economic, environmental, and social needs; for today and for the future.

The department's work for the next 12 months will make a direct contribution to government's priorities. We will continue to deliver the wide range of programs and services needed to implement the innovative new approach to natural resources management called for in the strategy. We look forward to working with our stakeholders and partners to collectively manage our natural assets for a more prosperous future.



Mr. Duff Montgomerie
Deputy Minister, Natural Resources

3 Department Mandate

The department has broad responsibilities relative to the management of Nova Scotia's biodiversity, forest, geological, and park resources and the administration of the province's Crown land (where management includes the development, conservation and protection of these resources).

Biodiversity and wildlife related responsibilities include supporting and promoting the conservation and the sustainable and ethical use of wildlife populations, habitats and ecosystems in Nova Scotia; collecting information and conducting research to better manage wildlife and their habitats; developing protection and recovery programs for threatened and endangered species and their habitats; undertaking biodiversity initiatives; and protecting areas of important wildlife habitats or populations.

Forests related responsibilities, on both Crown and private lands, include forest management planning and research; developing and implementing strategies that support and contribute to sustainable forests; maintaining the provincial forest inventory; producing data on the province's forest resources; monitoring primary forest production; coordinating extension programs and support for forestry sector development; and delivering programs to protect our forests from fires, pests and diseases.

Geological resources related responsibilities include implementing policies and programs that help to ensure the best use of the province's mineral, groundwater and geoheritage resources; collecting and managing geoscientific information; monitoring compliance with regulatory requirements; administering the mineral rights tenure system and mineral royalties; and promoting an understanding of the risks geological hazards pose to Nova Scotians.

Park related responsibilities include planning, designing, developing and operating a comprehensive system of over 120 camping and day-use parks and natural area parks and park reserves, in addition to supporting facilities on Crown lands, various trails and other outdoor recreational opportunities. The provincial parks system preserves unique and scenic landscapes, and cultural and heritage resources; and provides opportunities for outdoor recreation, an appreciation and awareness of our natural and cultural land base, community economic development and amenities for the traveling public. The department is also responsible for approximately 1,200 kilometres of abandoned rail corridor, and for beaches designated under the *Beaches Act*.

Stewardship and outreach activities are undertaken to provide accurate natural resources related information to Nova Scotians to help them make informed decisions and choices with respect to the conservation and use of natural resources.

More than one quarter of the province's land base is administered and controlled as provincial Crown land and protected areas. The department also administers inland submerged land and submerged lands along the province's coastline. Crown land related responsibilities include enforcement of laws and policies, management and development of resources on Crown land; protection and conservation of Crown land through designations and agreements; and maintenance of Crown boundaries.

Crown land responsibilities related to the management and sustainable use of resources include administering Crown land licenses for timber and other resources; investing in silviculture on Crown land in support forest sustainability; and maintaining a network of access roads on Crown lands. The administration of Crown land encompasses responsibility for the acquisition, leasing and disposal of interests in Crown lands; clarification of interests in Crown lands; registration of Crown land titles; and control and management of Crown lands records. This also involves establishing and maintaining Crown boundaries and monitoring land surveying activities on Crown land

Trail and off-highway vehicles (OHV) related responsibilities include overseeing Crown land trails; creating trail development policy; establishing trails networks; and managing trail issues. OHV related responsibilities include establishing and monitoring safety and training standards and requirements; and monitoring and addressing issues and conflicts as they arise.

Enforcement related responsibilities include achieving compliance with departmental acts and promoting a better understanding of resource and Crown land protection and use issues and concerns. Activities include directing the development, coordination, implementation, and delivery of a natural resources law enforcement and compliance program.

The department's vision is described in "The Path We Share, A Natural Resources Strategy for Nova Scotia 2011-2020":

In 2020 and beyond

- Nova Scotia is rich in natural resources - including biodiversity, forests, geological resources, and provincial parks.
- Individuals and groups interested in our natural resources work with the government to manage these resources wisely
- All Nova Scotians benefit from the natural health and wealth of the province.

4 Government Priorities

Government has identified three core priorities to guide and focus government's actions. The department's ongoing programs and services, and new initiatives support aspects of each of government's overarching priorities. The three core priorities are:

- better health care for you and your family
- create good jobs and grow the economy
- get back to balance and ensure government lives within its means

4.1 Better Health Care For You and Your Family

The department supports this government priority by providing programs and services that promote healthy individuals, healthy communities, and a healthy province. At the individual level, the park system provides opportunities for camping, hiking and other healthy outdoor recreational activities. At the community level, geological research is helping to identify and develop strategies to address a range of environmental and public safety issues, such as elevated levels of radon in homes, arsenic in drinking water, sinkholes, and coastal flooding and erosion. At the provincial level, the promotion of biodiversity and a healthy forest contribute to a wide range of goods and services we take for granted. Examples include water filtration, habitat, pollination, flood control, carbon sequestration, genetic resources, and many more.

4.2 Create Good Jobs and Grow the Economy

Many of the department's activities directly support a growing economy and jobs creation. Investments made in the forestry sector in silviculture and to support woodlot owners is laying the foundation now for sustainable forests and an innovative and sustainable forestry sector in the future. The province's minerals sector has been an important contributor to the provincial economy and to many rural communities for generations. Future mineral development projects, that are carried out in a sustainable manner and where Nova Scotians have been engaged in the planning and decision making, will continue to support our economy and our communities. The department is also exploring and implementing new ways to improve our provincial land and resource management information and decision making. This will help to identify and promote new types of economic development, support stable jobs in rural communities, build and enhance local economies and contribute to the development of green technologies.

4.3 Get Back to Balance and Ensure Government Lives Within Its Means

A number of departmental initiatives are making a contribution towards getting government back to balance. One example is work being planned to engage Nova Scotians on how to create a park system that is culturally, ecologically, and fiscally sustainable over the long-term, and that is an accurate reflection of public values. Another example is the provincial land and resource management technology initiative. This will facilitate the sharing and linking of land and resource related data with departments that are responsible for the management of land and resources. The project will also provide significantly improved systems for managing the department's land and resource activities.

5 Performance Measures

The approval and release of the natural resources strategy in August 2011 has provided direction on several areas where it is important for the department to track and report on progress in meeting strategy commitments.

Several new measures have been added this year. Other measures are expected to be added in subsequent years, as the implementation of the strategy proceeds and new measures are identified.

Outcome - Sustainable Natural Resources				
Measure	**Base Year**	**Target**	**Trends**	**Strategic Actions**
Percentage of required value of silviculture on private and industrial lands completed	140% (2006)	100% (2011)	2007 - 119% 2008 - 105% 2009 - 175% 2010 - 127%	Analyze wood supply requirements. Administer audit, monitoring and compliance programs.
Percentage of forested land harvested using clearcut harvest method	Details of the measure are being developed.			Complete technical definition of clearcutting. Develop a method to track harvest types.
Provincial camping park occupancy rate (core season)	43.4% (2011)	Maintain 2011 level during park system review	New measure	Undertake parks system review. Improve client service. Promote the provincial parks system.

[1] The core camping season occupancy rate is the ratio of occupied camping sites to available camping sites during July and August at departmentally operated camping parks.

Outcome - Sustainable Natural Resources				
Measure	**Base Year**	**Target**	**Trends**	**Strategic Actions**
Percentage of endangered and threatened species with recovery plans in place (as of March 31) [2]	74% (2006)	100% (2012)	2007 - 89% 2008 - 94% 2009 - 78% 2010 - 79% 2011 - 83%	Provide support and resources for the development of recovery plans. Work with partners on recovery plans.

Outcome - Accessible Information				
Measure	**Base Year**	**Target**	**Trends**	**Strategic Actions**
Quality of geological databases [3]	89% (2011-12)	89% (2015-16)	89% (2011-12)	Work on the provincial land and resource management technology project. Collect/update information on the geology of the province.

Outcome - A Safe, Knowledgeable Organization				
Measure	**Base Year**	**Target**	**Trends**	**Strategic Actions**
Percent of employees who somewhat agree or strongly agree that the department creates a safe work environment [4]	78% (2004)	89% (2013)	2007 - 89% 2009 - 88% 2011 - 79%	Work to identify areas where safety improvements can be made and continue to promote a safe work culture.
Percent of employees who somewhat agree or strongly agree that they have access to training opportunities [5]	74% (2004)	86% (2013)	2007 - 86% 2009 - 83% 2011 - 74%	Review / establish training and staffing plans. Identify and provide access to information on training opportunities that are most relevant to / important to the department and government.

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2 The *Endangered Species Act* requires that recovery plans must be in place one year after listing for endangered species and two years after listing for threatened species.

3 The data for this measure is taken from the Fraser Institute's annual survey of mining companies. The measure encompasses the quality and scale of maps, ease of access to information, etc.

4 The data for this measure is taken from periodic surveys of all permanent civil servants conducted by the Public Service Commission.

5 See previous footnote.

6 Budget Context

The following table provides budget information for the department.

Department of Natural Resources - Budget Context			
	2011-12 Estimate	**2011-12 Forecast**	**2012-13 Estimate**
Programs and Services	**$thousands**	**$thousands**	**$thousands**
Senior Management	516	491	516
Corporate Services Unit [6]	4,625	4,158	4,401
Renewable Resources	16,114	29,959	15,729
Mineral Resources	3,633	3,747	3,861
Regional Services	59,886	53,691	62,927
Policy, Planning and Support Services	4,704	4,487	4,672
Land Services	3,367	3,364	3,579
Total - Departmental Expenses	92,845	99,897	95,685
Additional Information:			
Ordinary Revenue	6,910	11,947	6,250
Fees and Other Charges	1,981	2,336	2,052
Ordinary Recoveries	20	1,112	25
TCA Purchase Requirements	6,800	33,500	6,500
Provincially Funded Staff (# of FTE)	823	742	796

[6] The Corporate Services Unit figures include the cost of financial and information technology services provided to a number of other departments and agencies.